

A Message from
**ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL
LISA MADIGAN**



With utility prices on the rise, consumers throughout Illinois face increasingly expensive gas and electric bills. It is important to know that consumers are guaranteed certain protections.

Under Illinois Commerce Commission rules, gas and electric customers have specific rights designed to protect against the disconnection of heating service in cold weather. Illinois also provides several assistance programs to help qualifying households pay heating bills and save money by increasing home energy efficiency.

This brochure provides information about your rights and where to go for help if you are having difficulty paying your heating bills. If a utility attempts to terminate your heating service in violation of Illinois Commerce Commission rules, I urge you to contact my office at 1-800-386-5438 (TTY: 1-800-964-3013).

Sincerely,

Lisa Madigan
Illinois Attorney General



LISA MADIGAN
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

For more information about home heating assistance programs, call:

1-800-252-8643

TTY: 1-800-785-6055

CONSUMER HOTLINES

CHICAGO

1-800-386-5438

TTY: 1-800-964-3013

SPRINGFIELD

1-800-243-0618

TTY: 1-877-844-5461

CARBONDALE

1-800-243-0607

TTY: 1-877-675-9339

For additional information, contact the Illinois Commerce Commission's toll-free customer service line at:

1-800-524-0795

or visit

www.icc.state.il.us

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

Home heating

Gas and Electric

Consumers' Rights



With utility prices high during winter months, gas and electric customers should be aware of their rights under Illinois Commerce Commission rules designed to protect them from disconnection of heating service in cold weather.

Between December 1 and March 31, a gas or electric public utility cannot terminate heating service for non-payment unless:

- The customer has been offered a payment plan;
- The customer has refused to enter into a payment plan;
- The customer has received the required notice; and
- The outdoor temperature is 32°F or higher.

Notice Requirements

During the months of November, December, January, February, and March, a gas or electric public utility must notify the customer of its intention to terminate or cut off service by U.S. Mail at least 8 days prior to termination or deliver the notice at least 5 days prior to termination.

Temperature Restrictions



Termination of gas or electric service where such service is the only source of heating is prohibited on any day that the National Weather Service forecast for the following 24 hours is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below; termination is also prohibited on any day preceding a holiday or weekend where the forecast for any day during the holiday or weekend is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Customers should call their gas or electric utility to determine if shut-offs are a possibility when the temperature rises.

Illness Certificates

Illinois Commerce Commission rules also require that utilities not shut off residential service if the utility has received a valid illness certificate. An illness certificate is documentation from a licensed physician indicating that shutting off heating service would worsen an existing medical condition or create a medical emergency for a permanent resident of the home. Illness certificates are good for one month and can be renewed by a doctor or the Board of Health for an additional month. Customers with serious illnesses should ask their utility how to submit an illness certificate.



Payment Plans



Customers with delinquent accounts may contact the customer service department of their gas or electric public utility (see monthly bill for the customer service number)

and request a payment plan or deferred billing plan. Many of these plans permit customers to spread utility costs out over several months or even a year. Customer service telephone numbers for Illinois' major gas utilities are:

- **Peoples' Gas Co.**
866-556-6001
- **North Shore Gas Co.**
847-336-9300
- **NICOR**
888-642-6742 (NICOR 4 U)
- **Illinois Power Co.**
800-755-5000
- **Mid-American Energy**
888-427-5632
- **CIPS (Central Illinois Public Service)**
888-789-2477
- **CILCO (Central Illinois Light Co.)**
888-672-5252 (outside Peoria)
309-672-5252 (in Peoria)

Assistance Programs

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity provides assistance to qualified applicants through two programs:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

This program is designed to help income eligible households meet the high cost of home energy. For more information, call 1-800-252-8643; TTY: 1-800-785-6055.

Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP)

This program is designed to help income eligible households conserve fuel and save money by making their homes and apartments energy efficient. For more information, call 1-800-252-8643; TTY: 1-800-785-6055.